

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for displaying an e-mail collection comprising:

receiving a sequence of e-mail messages;

5 categorizing each e-mail message into at least one of a plurality of categories; and

displaying each of the categorized messages in accordance with a display specification,

wherein the display specification specifies how each of the plurality of categories are displayed.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving at least one of a plurality of definitions for display specifications from a user;

10 and

receiving a user selection of one of the plurality of display specifications, wherein the displaying of the e-mail messages is in accordance with the user selected display specification.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the display specification provides for the display of the e-mail messages in one of the plurality of categories by encapsulating the messages into threads and for providing at least one item on the top level display for each of the corresponding threads.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the display specification provides for the display of the e-mail messages in one of the plurality of categories by encapsulating the messages in the corresponding category and for providing at least one item on the top level display for the corresponding category.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the display specification includes a plurality of user-defined rule-based categories, wherein one of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories is nested within another of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories and wherein the nested user-defined rule-based category is displayed differently than the another of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing an editor window display which lists the plurality of categories and a plurality of message display alternatives for each of the plurality of categories; and

receiving a user selection of one of the plurality of message display alternatives for one of the plurality of categories.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a tool button that is adapted to receive a user command to perform an operation on messages associated with an identified item; and

performing the operation on the messages associated with the identified item in response to a user operation of the tool button.

5 8. A computer controlled display system for displaying an e-mail collection, the system comprising:

 a display for presenting the e-mail collection on a viewing area of the display; and

 a processor that is adapted to receive a sequence of e-mail messages in the e-mail collection; to categorize each e-mail message into at least one of a plurality of categories; and to
10 control the display to display each of the categorized messages in accordance with a display specification, wherein the display specification specifies how each of the plurality of categories are displayed.

 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the processor is further adapted to:

 receive at least one of a plurality of definitions for display specifications from a user;

15 receive a plurality of display specifications from the user; and

 receive a user selection of one of the plurality of display specifications, wherein the display of e-mail messages is in accordance with the user selected display specification.

 10. The system of claim 8, wherein the display specification provides for the display of the e-mail messages in one of the plurality of categories by encapsulating the messages into
20 threads and for providing one item on the top level display for each of the corresponding threads.

 11. The system of claim 8, wherein the display specification provides for the display of the e-mail messages in one of the plurality of categories by encapsulating the messages in the corresponding category and for providing at least one item on the top level display for the corresponding category.

25 12. The system of claim 8, wherein the display specification includes a plurality of user-defined rule-based definitions of categories, wherein at least one of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories is nested within another of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories, and wherein the nested user-defined rule-based category is displayed differently than the another of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories.

30 13. The system of claim 8, wherein the processor is further adapted:

to provide an editor window display which lists the plurality of categories and a plurality of message display alternatives for each of the plurality of categories;

to receive a user selection of one of the plurality of message display alternatives for one of the plurality of categories.

5 14. The system of claim 8, wherein the processor is further adapted:

to provide a tool button that is adapted to receive a user command to delete messages associated with an identified item; and

to delete the messages associated with the identified item in response to a user operation of the tool button.

10 15. The system of claim 8, wherein the processor is further adapted:

to receive a user command from a tool button; and

to perform the operation on the messages associated with the identified item in response to a user operation of the tool button.

15 16. An information storage media comprising information that displays an e-mail collection, the information comprising:

information that receives a sequence of e-mail messages in the e-mail collection;

information that categorizes each e-mail message into at least one of a plurality of categories; and

20 information that displays each of the categorized messages in accordance with a display specification, wherein the display specification specifies how each of the plurality of categories are displayed.

17. The media of claim 16, further comprising:

information that receives at least one of a plurality of definitions for display specifications from a user; and

25 information that receives a user selection of one of the plurality of display specifications, wherein the displaying of the e-mail messages is in accordance with the user selected display specification.

30 18. The media of claim 16, wherein the display specification provides for the display of the e-mail messages in one of the plurality of categories by encapsulating the messages into threads and for providing one item on the top level display for each of the corresponding threads.

19. The media of claim 16, wherein the display specification provides for the display of the e-mail messages in one of the plurality of categories by encapsulating the messages in the corresponding category and for providing one item on the top level display for the corresponding category.

20. The media of claim 16, wherein the display specification includes a plurality of user-defined rule-based categories, wherein at least one of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories is nested within another of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories, and wherein the nested user-defined rule-based category is displayed differently than the another of the plurality of user-defined rule-based categories.

21. The media of claim 16, further comprising:
information that provides an editor window display which lists the plurality of categories and a plurality of message display alternatives for each of the plurality of categories; and
information that receives a user selection of one of the plurality of message display alternatives for one of the plurality of categories.

22. The media of claim 16, further comprising information that:
receives a user command; and
performs the operation on the messages associated with the identified item in response to a user operation of the tool button.